



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION OFFICER PLEADS GUILTY TO
FEDERAL BRIBERY CHARGE**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced this afternoon that 43-year-old Gerardo Diaz, an inspector with the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), pled guilty this morning to a bribery charge.

By his guilty plea, Diaz admitted that he accepted a \$15,000 bribe to allow five kilograms of cocaine to be smuggled into the United States from the Republic of Mexico without inspection at the Ysleta Port of Entry. As a result, Diaz faces up to 15 years in federal prison. Sentencing is scheduled for 8:30am on March 15, 2005, before United States District Judge David Briones.

Diaz' co-defendant, 41-year-old Saira Garnica, a resident alien living in El Paso, pled guilty this morning to one count of Misprision of felony. As a result, she faces up to three years in federal prison for lying to authorities about introducing Diaz to the confidential informant for the purpose of initiating the bribe. Garnica is scheduled to be sentenced at 8:30am on March 16, 2005. Both Diaz and Garnica remain in custody.

This case was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security - Office of Inspector General, Federal Bureau of Investigation and United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement - Office of Investigations. Assistant United States Attorneys Brandy Gardes and William Lewis are prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

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